2/18/71

Mr. Eugene Eidenberg
Ass't V.P. for Administration
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minn.

Dear Mr. Eidenberg,

Just received a copy of the Minneapolis Star story of 2/12, saying that you have recommended the destruction of espionage files improperly collected and in collaboration with military intelligence. While this in not my purpose in writing you, I suggest that should your campus police destroy every copy of every such file in their possession, that will be a meaningless gesture. If you have any familiarity with such operations, by now you know that the essence of those files is contained in every government intelligence file, if not that of credit-bureau investigators, too, and that for the rest of their lives the innocent will suffer for it.

Whether or not with the involvement of your campus police, I was the subject of this kind of intrusion into my rights while I was the guest of your University in 1967, most inappropriately for a speaker whose topic was "The Integrity of Our Society" and whose speech dealt with and documented such intrusions. I was the guest of the Student Union. I think the faculty representative present will recall some of this incident, for tape-recorder-equipped agents were spotted in the audience. A tape was made of my speech and it includes references to these men.

I apparently was shadowed, too, for this also was observed and can today be confirmed to you, in some detail.

Much as I resent this feeble intimidation of a speaker, the interference with the rights of a writer, and the transgression against any concept of academic freedom, I have an added complaint. When I left Minneapolis, on a plane that originated there, and was met by a member of the faculty under whose auspices I went to Kansas City, and with Kansas City that plane's first stop, I had no luggage. I insisted that the plane be held for search and this was done. Several days later that luggage turned up, somewhat mysteriously, in a city to which that plane didn't go and in the possession of another airline. I watched it go down the Braniff chute in Minneapolis.

The net result is that every paper, even such things as papers of matches, was missing. I carried books in one of the pouches of my Val-a-Pak, but removed them before hanging it because of the weight. This wasn't done and that bag was ruined, the handle being torn out. Aside from the poor condition of my clothes when I finally got them, on that trip I sustained this added damage: a brand new, $100 casette tape recorder was ruined and a brand new portable typewriter was rendered inoperative with such professional skill that while the case remained without a scratch, every part of the frame was broken and other minor things, like the ribbon transport, were so deformed that I had to junk it. The dealer from whom I had just bought it said it wasn't worth fixing.

Braniff could not have been more considerate and helpful, more embarrassed, or more completely without explanation of how this could have happened through normal error or carelessness. To the degree regulations permitted, they tried to make up my loss. After that, it still came to close to $200.00.

But need I tell you how completely crippled an investigative reporter is when he starts to work with neither a typewriter nor a tape recorder more than a thousand miles away from his home? Thus you can see still another intrusion into my rights and an interference with my ability to work. In context, this was also the theft of my First-Amendment rights.

Before these files are destroyed I would like you to make a thorough inquiry and provide me with copies of all existing records of this espionage against me, with copies of any pictures that may have been taken (and flashbulbs were popping all over the audience), and of any other records that may remain or with any information you may be able to get.

If I neither suggest nor believe that the University administration caused or wanted such things, I also suggest that it is not without responsibility.

It has been several months since I wrote Army Secretary Resor about this. He has made no response. Nor has the Army's general counsel. I find it difficult to interpret this unseemly silence as evidence of innocence.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg